

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend Claim 45. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Claim Listing

1-40 Canceled.

41. (Previously presented) A method of identifying an agent which enhances the activity of a caspase or procaspase, wherein said caspase or procaspase is expressed in immature thymocytes as a result of T cell receptor stimulation with SEQ ID NO: 9, and wherein said caspase mediates immature thymocyte susceptibility to cell death, comprising the steps of:

- (a) contacting a caspase or procaspase expressed in immature thymocytes as a result of T cell receptor stimulation with SEQ ID NO: 9, with a caspase substrate in the presence of the agent; and
- (b) comparing the activity of said caspase or procaspase in the presence of the agent with the activity of said caspase or procaspase in the absence of the agent, wherein enhancement of the activity of said caspase or procaspase in the presence of the agent is indicative that the agent is one which enhances the activity of said caspase or procaspase.

42-44 Canceled.

45. (Currently amended) A method of enhancing the activity of a caspase or procaspase, wherein said caspase or procaspase is expressed in immature thymocytes as a result of T cell receptor stimulation with SEQ ID NO: 9, wherein said caspase mediates immature thymocyte susceptibility to cell death, comprising contacting a composition comprising a caspase or procaspase expressed in immature thymocytes as a result of stimulation with SEQ ID NO: 9, with an agent identified by the method of Claim 41 that enhances the activity of the caspase or procaspase.

46-62 Canceled.

63. (Previously presented) A method of identifying an agent which enhances the activity of a caspase or procaspase, wherein said caspase or procaspase is expressed in immature thymocytes as a result of T cell receptor stimulation with SEQ ID NO: 9, and wherein said caspase is necessary for apoptosis, comprising the steps of:
- (a) contacting the caspase or procaspase expressed in immature thymocytes as a result of T-cell receptor stimulation with SEQ ID NO: 9, with biotin-DEVDamk in the presence of the agent; and
 - (b) comparing the activity of said caspase or procaspase in the presence of the agent with the activity of said caspase or procaspase in the absence of the agent, whereby enhancement of the activity of said caspase or procaspase in the presence of the agent is indicative that the agent is one which enhances the activity of said caspase or procaspase.
64. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 41, wherein the enhanced procaspase or caspase activity results from prolonging the duration of the activity.
65. Canceled.
66. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 41, wherein the enhanced activity of caspase results from increased conversion of procaspase to caspase.
67. Canceled.
68. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 45, wherein the enhanced procaspase or caspase activity results from prolonging the duration of the activity.
69. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 45, wherein the enhanced procaspase or caspase activity results from increasing the amount of procaspase or caspase.
70. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 69, wherein the increased amount of caspase results from increased conversion of procaspase to caspase.
71. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 69, wherein the increased amount of caspase results from increased oligomerization of the caspase.